

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for invoking delivery of a digital product from a computer of an Internet vendor to a computer of a customer, while maintaining customer anonymity with respect to the vendor, comprising, with the computer system of a merchant:

5 transacting a sale of the digital product to the customer;

in response to the sale, transmitting to the customer a receipt for the purchase, said receipt containing a reference by which the customer may initiate a request for product delivery;

10 receiving a request for product delivery from the computer of the customer produced from the receipt; and

in response to the request for product delivery, securely transmitting to the computer of the vendor a fulfillment request containing sufficient information for the vendor to deliver the digital product to the customer,

15 wherein the method is performed without exposing the identity of the customer to the vendor.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the method is performed without exposing payment or transaction information, pertaining to the sale of the digital product, to the vendor.

20 3. The method of claim 1, wherein the method is performed without exposing the address of the customer to the vendor.

25 4. The method of claim 1, wherein no information about the customer is exposed to the vendor.

5. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
receiving from the vendor an acknowledgment of product delivery to the customer.

30 6. The method of claim 1, transmitting to the customer a receipt for the purchase comprises:

creating a receipt identification;

encrypting the receipt identification;
encoding the encrypted receipt identification;
placing the encoded, encrypted receipt identification within a message;

and

5 sending the message to the customer..

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the message is sent to the customer via email.

10 8. The method of claim 6, wherein placing the encoded, encrypted receipt identification within a message comprises:

incorporating the encoded encrypted receipt identification in a Uniform Resource Locator (URL);

placing the Uniform Resource Locator within a text message.

15 9. The method of claim 8, wherein the message is sent to the customer via email..

20 10. The method of claim 8, wherein receiving a request for product delivery from the customer comprises:

receiving an HTTP request directed at the Uniform Resource Locator;

and

authenticating the request for product delivery.

25 11. The method of claim 10, wherein authenticating the request for product delivery comprises:

parsing the Uniform Resource Locator for the encoded encrypted receipt identification;

decoding the encoded encrypted receipt identification; and

30 decrypting the encrypted receipt identification.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the fulfillment request is created by redirecting the request for product delivery to the vendor.

13. The method of claim 1, further comprising authenticating the fulfillment request.

5 14. The method of claim 13, wherein the fulfillment request contains a secure hash, the secure hash being a function of an identifier of the purchased product.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein authenticating the fulfillment request utilizes a de-hashing function of the secure hash.

10 16. The method of claim 1, wherein securely transmitting to the vendor a fulfillment request comprises sending one or more HTTP messages to the vendor.

15 17. The method of claim 16, wherein the one or more HTTP messages simulate a connection from an interactive customer.

18. A method of delivering a digital product from a computer of an on-line vendor to a computer of a customer at the request of a computer of on-line merchant comprising;

20 receiving an order fulfillment request resulting from a transaction between the customer and the on-line merchant;
verifying the validity of the fulfillment request; and
delivering the product to the computer of the customer;
wherein the identity of the customer is not exposed to the vendor.

25 19. The method of claim 18, wherein the method is performed without exposing payment or transaction information, pertaining to the sale of the digital product, to the vendor.

30 20. The method of claim 18, wherein the method is performed without exposing the address of the customer to the vendor.

21. The method of claim 18, wherein delivering the product to the computer of the customer comprises:

transmitting the digital product directly from the computer of the on-line vendor to the computer of the customer.

5 22. The method of claim 18, wherein delivering the product to the computer of the customer comprises:

transmitting the product to the computer of the on-line merchant,
forwarding the transmission of the digital product from the computer of the on-line merchant to the computer of the customer.

10 23. The method of claim 18 wherein receiving an order fulfillment request comprises receiving one or more HTTP requests mimicking the behavior of a customer.

15 24. A digital product delivery system, wherein the digital product is purchased by a customer from an on-line merchant and delivered to a computer of the customer from a computer of an on-line vendor, comprising:

a rights manager, operated by the merchant, the rights manager receiving a request for the delivery of a digital product from the computer of the customer; and

20 an order processor operated by the vendor connected to the rights manager via a communications network;

wherein, the transfer of the product from the order processor to the customer's computer occurs at the direction of the rights manager and without the disclosure of the identity of the customer to the vendor.

25 25. The digital product delivery system of claim 24, wherein payment and transaction information pertaining to the purchase of the digital product is not disclosed to the vendor.

30 26. The digital product delivery system of claim 24, wherein the address of the customer is not disclosed to the vendor.

27. The digital product delivery system of claim 24, wherein the communications network is the Internet.